

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

Washington, DC 20515

May 4, 2023

Lloyd J. Austin III  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Austin:

We write extremely concerned about reports that the United States Navy met with a “drag queen influencer”<sup>1</sup> in an attempt to persuade new recruits to join the military. Reports mention Yeoman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Joshua Kelley announced back in November 2022 that he was the Navy’s “Digital Ambassador.” If true, this is unacceptable and will exacerbate the already historic recruitment crisis our country is facing.

As you know, recent estimates show that only 9% of America’s youth are interested in military service. This troubling reality has led to the Army missing their recruitment goals for last year by 15,000 soldiers or 25 percent. Also, the other branches barely hit their active-duty recruitment goals as well. This crisis has even forced the Navy to increase their age limit from 39 to 41 in an attempt to increase recruitment.

Woke ideology and drag queen shows have no place in our military, and will only serve to hurt our recruitment. We should be focused on deterring China and other adversaries, not drag shows which do nothing to enhance our deterrence and warfighting capabilities. If these reports are true, we request you put an end to any drag shows and any “drag queen influencers” performing in our military.

In addition, we request your response by May 12, 2023 to the following questions:

1. Can you confirm that the Navy appointed Joshua Kelly as the “Digital Ambassador?”
2. If Joshua Kelly is the Navy’s Digital Ambassador, who within the Department of Defense made this decision?
3. Explain in detail with supporting data how drag shows improve recruitment and readiness?

Sincerely,

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<sup>1</sup> US Navy platformed ‘drag queen influencer’ to attract youth to the military in hiring crisis  
<https://www.foxnews.com/media/us-navy-platformed-drag-queen-influencer-attract-youth-military-hiring-crisis>



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CC:

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